



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

Highlands Golf Course
5501 NW 12th Street
Lincoln, NE 68521

February 23, 2004
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Present: Crouch, Curry, Gieschen, Grothe, Hahn, Ham, Herrera, Hultine, Jelinek, Kolb, Lloyd, Newman, Rucker, Shepard, Vavrina
Absent: Bloechle, Dale Christensen, Grone, Nolan Brown, Kimmons, Rasmussen, Schultz

I. Public Comment

A. None

II. Approval of Agenda

- A. Motion by Sue Gieschen
- B. Seconded by Merwyn Vavrina
- C. Agenda Approved

III. Approval of Minutes

- A. Motion by Gayle Hahn
- B. Sue Gieschen Seconded
- C. Approved

IV. Directors Report (Frank Lloyd)

A. Budget Request

1. Met with Senator Jensen and gave request to restore budget to FY 2003 level. Concern-governor may veto any increase in his budget proposal. DD Planning is sending a letter to the appropriations committee to support Voc Rehab's budget request. Community Rehab programs have made personal contacts or sent letters in our support. Community Mental Health Services will be important to us. Senator Jensen and the governor are working hand in hand to approve LB1083 Behavioral Health Service Bill. If they won't replenish our state revenue but increase our 2005 level, we can use an additional amount of state money in the first quarter of the state year to match what was left in the federal year. If they appropriate additional funds, we will lose about 1.2 million dollars. If we lose the money it will come out of case services and we would not be able to serve all consumers. Michelle Hultine and Susan Rucker felt that the fact sheet distributed after the last SRC meeting was very helpful and have passed the information on. Many are unaware of the state-federal dollar match.

B. Transition Parent Planner

1. Jack and Frank are working with Lloya Fritz to develop the Transition Parent Planner. Draft will be available this week. We will send it out as we

get closer to a final draft. Jack Shepard mentioned that a document that speaks to both parents and students about transition would be helpful. He feels that it would prepare parents and students for what will happen and how the program works.

The Parent Planner was intended to get information to parents early on in the transition process, so that they would know what to expect. We will have a draft before the next meeting.

C. Front end Process

1. Revisions will be introduced at the next leadership meeting. The Front End Process includes a sequence of activities that help people think about their interests, skills, barriers, and other things that must be taken into consideration. We have a major revision planned for that. Hopefully, these will be printed before the end of the month.
2. Concern- There is considerable paperwork for the consumer to complete, but there are also good questions. To reduce some of that paperwork, we tried to cut down on some of the self-exploration questions. We'll have fewer questions and also a resource guide for the staff.
3. We are trying to get a better analysis of the most important areas in the process. So now each activity will be discussed when clients meet with our staff. They will look at the consumer's interests and their job goal. By the time you've been through all the activities, the client can see whether or not their goal is plausible.
4. Layout will be changed to make the material more appealing.

D. Employment Warranty Newsletter

1. New newsletter to highlight successfully employed clients. Job retention tips, considerations for those who have been working in a job for a while. This newsletter will go out quarterly to clients who are employed and in the Employment Warranty Program.

E. Quality Employment Solutions

1. Very good response – We send out a letter that asks whether or not consumers would like to be featured. We are asking them if they would be comfortable having their stories sent to senators and newspapers. So far, at least one senator has responded positively. We think this will put a positive face on the program. The intent is to give some recognition to the program and the consumers. Sandy mentioned that the population of consumers we have featured is very diverse.

F. Department of Labor NAIC and SOC Codes training

1. The NAIC codes define the work industry and the SOC codes define the job. All VR field staff are attending this training and it will be incorporated in the VR New Staff Training modules.

G. Veteran's Administration

2. A partnership has been set up with the VA to improve the referral process between VA and VR. One advantage to the VA is that VR has staff all around the state while the Veterans program is not so well represented. Finally, the VA is willing to lend significant financial support for our mutual clients.

H. Pilot Project- (Jack Shepard)

1. Special Education and VR are working on an 18-21 year old population project
2. Concentrates on Supported Employment-Servicelinc is involved.

3. The project is working with a few small school districts- This is a pilot project, we want to keep it small. It identifies children that need to be in school to age 21 because they experience a disability. We determine which of these kids could be employed with the necessary supports. We granted some money to the state DD system to use for Supported Employment. We are working with schools, VR, and DD, providers. We meet periodically, receive applications and approve or deny them. Ideal candidates for this program would be able to work in a paid position with a few necessary supports. About 20 kids have been referred to the process. Some were good candidates, some were not. Those who participate work half days, while the rest of the day they continue schooling. The program requires that all kids stay under an IEP, so that if it doesn't work out, the student can return to the standard school program. We are working with Senator Byars on this as well.
4. We want people to acknowledge that not all kids under an IEP need to stay in school until age 21. Janet Anderson, Senator Byars' staff assistant, is interested in this also. Right now we are considering broadening the program to see how it goes. It would be helpful to get some numbers to validate this process. It's been very interesting to collaborate with all of these partners.

I. Medicaid Infrastructure- (Jack Shepard)

1. Includes a sub grant to Easter Seals that provides benefits analysis to students that receive SSI to see if it would be possible for them to work.
2. The grant is targeting transition students. We are trying to educate educators so that they are aware of the resources available and can refer students and parents. Trying also to provide benefits analysis for students and families. Encourage kids to go to work if there is not a risk to their benefits. We will target just a couple of school districts at first. Excited about these programs. Frank mentioned that he was pleased to see some progress in this area. Schools need incentives to get children with disabilities prepared for the workforce and independent living. But also necessary is the safety net... no risk to their school situation if it doesn't work out.

J. Work incentives Grant (Tracey Grothe)

1. Will train One Stop staff about ATP
 - i. Adding unit to each One Stop so that they all have computer and internet access.
 - ii. Training staff on how to deal with clients who need to use the technology
 - iii. 3 training modules- in April, May, and June. Increments are 1/2 days.
 - iv. Participating with VR
2. 1st training-Disability awareness
 - i. Facilitate inclusion
3. 2nd Training (with VR) Community Services through One Stops
 - ii. Inform about ATP's different partners
 - iii. Resources available for population with disabilities-lead into ATP
4. 3rd Training- will train staff to use the new computer equipment
 - i. Tip sheets about using the equipment and resources will be available.

K. Tech Try

1. Money available for employers to make worksites better for those who need it. Can borrow equipment first.
2. Equipment housed in Omaha- Try it before you buy it.

3. One stop staff trained to help

V. State Old Business

A. State Staff (Merwyn Vavrina)

1. Kearney-November 13-14. Large number of people. Frank opened the conference. One speaker, Cammy Coleman works in CO. She works with sheltered workshops. Valda Boyd Ford did a cultural awareness talk. She mentioned that culture is responsible for a person's experience, values, and behaviors. Then there was a Job training segment, mental health, and motivational interviewing. Mental health lent an awareness that I didn't have before. Cammy Coleman had an interesting perspective on introducing your client and selling your client. Important what a person perceives and hears when they first meet you. Next day included ATP. Talked about equipment loan. In summary, a major event-glad I attended. Got the impression that staff is very dedicated and proud of their accomplishments. Was surprised at the longevity of some of the employees. Entertainment very enlightening!

B. Amend Bylaws (Michelle Hultine)

1. Motion made in October to amend bylaws to say that elections will be held in the last meeting of the federal fiscal year instead of the first of the year. We have been suspending the bylaws until now.
2. Motion approved

VII. New Business

A. Self-Employment Presentation (Wayne Miller)

1. Don did introduction- VR Hasn't advocated for self-employment much until Wayne Miller came along. Today, he's going to give us a Summary report so that we can get an idea concerning where we are in this area. (Don Crouch)
2. My job is to help people who have disabilities and want to be self-employed see if their idea is plausible. Sometimes it's not and we also try to find alternatives if possible. It's all one on one work with the clients. The first meeting we talk about the program, if possible with the counselor present. We go over the Self Employment program so that they know what's involved and what's expected of them. My level of involvement varies, but the individual is expected to participate because having your own business is difficult. It can be very pleasurable also, however.
3. After that, I listen to them talk about their business ideas. I travel to them, they don't come to me. It is necessary that these individuals understand that they are important. I also tell them that I don't make decisions without VR. I just make the recommendations. There is also a copy of these recommendations provided for clients. I like to be as open as possible with clients. It's an honest, straightforward, no strings attached program. I allow them to do what they are able to do. The whole process is for them to learn and think through their idea. Usually we don't end up where we started. But the changes are theirs, not mine.
4. I made up a handout about self-employment in general. Handout includes business ideas and the counties we have influenced with this role. Janitorial and beauty salons are the two most popular. All janitorial services and beauty salons have been successful. We've had good success so far. We're over 90% successful, meaning people are still in business after three years. This

may drift downward. So far it's been a tremendously successful program because it changes people's lives.

5. The process of working with people one on one with no ulterior motive is great. At the end of the day, when I see the outcomes, the people I work with are changed from the first time we met... even physically. It gives them a purpose that is recognized by the community at large. I see an upward movement in standard of living on a regular basis. Don mentioned that we are trying to start up a loan fund. Wayne has been helping us immensely. We have met with banks to get support and now this program is ready to go. Merwyn asked if most are home businesses. Wayne feels that most are home based business. Not having to pay rent and utilities for a second building is a huge benefit. One interesting note is that ninety percent of clients who utilize the self-employment services have previously filed for bankruptcy.
6. The maximum dollar amount that VR can provide to help someone start their business is 5,000 dollars. Many states give more money, but none of them have a higher success rate than Nebraska does. Michelle Hultine mentioned that the national average for self-employment in general is not nearly as high as it is with the clients we serve. Wayne felt that had to do with the one on one work. Having someone that they can talk to that they are comfortable with and that knows them is very beneficial. 'How are you?' And, 'How's business?' are two questions that open the door for discussion. Many of the business failures are a result of health related problems. There have been failures because of lack of resources. Successes are just people who have not given up, not necessarily those who are making a certain dollar amount. Eileen mentioned that she wouldn't be where she is without the program. She is one of Wayne's successes. Wayne will be presenting at an AEO conference in May. Susan asked if Wayne would prefer to see people who want to go off of benefits. Wayne said, yes, that is a necessary desire to be eligible for the self-employment program.

B. HIPAA Regulations (Kristin Petersen)

1. General information- Health insurance portability and accountability act. HIPAA means heightened confidentiality requirements. For instance, who is authorized to see your medical information. Many companies are making changes to releases- Health care providers, health care plan providers, and health care clearing houses are the affected businesses.
2. The issue VR has to deal with is how we can go to doctors and get medical information on our clients. We have release forms, and wondered if they would have to change. We found that some doctor's offices would grant information, and some would not. We have assigned people, therefore, to specifically work with release of information. There is one person per VR office. We surveyed them after six or seven months. Offices have started keeping a file with forms from specific offices. Most offices require that you use their release forms. All the forms are different, so we didn't change ours. We are going to keep looking at our release forms, and make them perhaps more reader friendly. We may incorporate some language to broaden our abilities. HIPPA does not apply to education records that are covered by FERPA.

C. Hotline Presentation (Shari Bahensky)

1. Brochures and magnets handed out. Have you ever heard of the Hotline for Disability Services? Since 1975-federally funded through CAP. Vicki

Rasmussen is the director. What is the hotline? The Hotline is a free info and referral service regarding disabilities. It includes resources for the whole state of Nebraska. We will advocate for individuals if needed. Who can use the hotline? Many people can use the Hotline, including persons with disabilities, families, friends, service providers, etc. What areas of the state does it serve? We serve the entire state. Toll free number is available for the entire Nation. We have a Resource Directory-database of over 1400 agencies. We add, delete, and update information on a continual basis. Information includes agency name, numbers, contacts, office hours, etc. Category searches include counseling, recreation, financial assistance, transportation, assistive technology, and many more. The public can access our directory online at www.cap.state.ne.us. Hours 8-4:30 Monday-Friday. No fees. VR publications will soon be featuring information about the Hotline.

VIII. Reports

A. Committee Reports

1. Client satisfaction-We went over the minutes and decided upon a couple of new focuses. We came up with 2 areas. One- new Front End Notebook. We will get a copy of the new formatting and get it out to our committee. Two-discussion about CAP report- some specific questions about the intake process of CAP. How it works, and how she makes determinations. A lot of it deals with who decides who is right or wrong. What kind of follow-up is there? Basic overview.
2. Strategic Issues- five issues that we will research. One-help VR maintain level of service despite funds Two- transition-how to improve and coordinate with schools, Three-telework and self-employment as options Four-improving one stop collaboration Five- faith based initiative-coordination with other disability organizations.
3. Interagency- 640 surveys sent out to gauge public satisfaction of VR,- 269 returned. Surveys are in four sections. They are, referral sources, thoughts on services, communication between agency and VR, working relationship between agency and VR. Of 269 returned, 82 were from schools. They listed services of greatest value to them. Recommendations are to make sure clients in areas where offices have closed are being served, clarify student transition and rules, perhaps brochures or handouts would be helpful. Continued training for VR staff in the areas of barriers to employment, dual diagnosis, job keeping skills, socioeconomic barriers, Deaf services, diversity, etc. continue to work and monitor case management on time taken to process cases, case reports and follow up after job placement. We want to send a report on the survey responses to all of the original 640 recipients, perhaps. Refer to website and keep it updated as to survey results, publications, etc. Jack motioned sending letter to VR offices concerning survey results and staff Merwyn seconded, approved. Regina would like a letter of support from the council to the Winnebago tribe with which she is affiliated. If she follows up with this, we will request more information on the project she needs support with. We will wait to see if she contacts us.

B. CAP Report

1. Vicki Rasmussen absent. Frank commented that Vicki meets with program directors and leadership. They talk about each of the issues that she has dealt

with. We decide whether or not a disciplinary action needs to be taken, etc. We consider what Vicki is doing very important. It does have impact on the agency and staff.

C. SILC Report (Tim Kolb)

1. SILC is developing the state plan. Developed a 5-page survey that will go out to the centers for independent living. It is written in a way that whoever takes the survey will be able to check the boxes and there will be very little filling in the blanks. Deadline 2-4 rescheduled for 2-25. Also there will be information about what Independent living means from the perspective of minors and adults. We have been active administratively and legislatively and are proposing a Medicaid buy-in upgrade. This is a way for people who want to be employed to become employed without losing their benefits (Part of a 1999 legislation.) We are proposing that income guidelines be broader. We've been able to persuade Senator Jensen to allow us to have a legislative briefing on Feb. 18th. A few people will testify that unless there is an upgrade of Medicaid buy in, they will perhaps lose their job, can't find one, or be otherwise negatively affected. We will push for continued funding for VR so that they can continue to do their job.

D. ATP Report (Tracey Grothe)

1. Equipment loan-Tech Try is rolling out in April. We are still gathering equipment and making liaisons. Housed in Omaha, but Omaha staff will help to transport equipment around the state when needed. This program is primarily intended for employers who want to hire someone with a disability, or have someone already employed with a disability. Michelle wonders if employers could lease the equipment instead of buy. Tracey wasn't sure about the answer to that. Connecting with the work incentives board, business leadership network, and greater Lincoln, Nebraska WIB boards. Equipment is technically owned by the state of Nebraska.

Motion to adjourn made by Eileen-seconded Sue